

Lizatović, Yvetta, *Careers Precipitated and Shaped by the Velvet Revolution: An Oral-Historian Analysis of Individuals*, FHS 2021.

Supervisor's report

The topic of Yvetta Lizatović's diploma thesis is very interesting. What sort of people were those who transformed the regime in Czechoslovakia after November 1989? What did they do in the 1980s? What education did they have? What experiences they gained in the 1980s did help them to be successful in 1990s (to become the winners of 1990s)? Do they have anything in common or was their success by chance? These kinds of topics opposes the traditional historical approaches, which strictly divide the Czechoslovak history on history before 1989 and history after 1989. The borderline in these kind of topics is blended. There are some precedents of that approach in the Czech historiography (for example V. Sommer, *Řídit socialismus jako firmu*; M. Kopeček et. al., *Architekti dlouhé změny* etc.).

I discussed the topic with Yvetta Lizatović at great length, and there are some noticeable traces of our discussions as, for example, the references to works of such persons as Michel Serres, Alexei Yurchak etc., but I must say that she worked on her text very independently and that she was very creative in the process. It was, therefore, very pleasant for me to be her thesis's supervisor.

In general, Yvetta Lizatović's thesis has – as I said – a very interesting topic and an elaborated structure as well. She has six narrators (from different social strata – from dissent to more „system“ people), she is able to go behind superficial descriptions of their stories and, in other words, she is able to give a nuanced analysis and interpretation, and she also showed knowledge of environment she writes about.

However now, I want to concentrate on one point of possible discussion.

I think that Yvetta Lizatović's work is written in a more essayistic style than it is usual in a diploma thesis. On one hand, I am convinced, however, that this style of writing itself is – in general – not harmful to her research work. On the other hand, I would say from this essayistic style of writing (it is most visible at the end of her diploma thesis) emerged all problematic parts of the text. I will give one example of this problematic place. Yvetta Lizatović's work is – if I could say it – eclectic at the theoretical level. By this, I mean that she does not hesitate to use works of contradictory authors. I already mentioned Alexei Yurchak's work; I should say that his work is based on absolutely differently approaches (also in relation to understanding of a „person“) than Václav Havel's work. Despite this incompatibility, Yvetta Lizatović did not hesitate to make parallel use of both of these contradictory men – with saying that both of them have different perspectives (but she choose consistently none of them). I would say that this „lightness“ in comparing of incomparable arises just from her essayistic style. In other words, there is no consistently followed line from the theoretical perspective.

This weakness is compensated on other side with creativity and ability to write an elaborated and meaningful text. I am not sure if this compensation is hundred per cent satisfactory, but I would say that it is to a great extent.

Altogether, it is possible to say, that Yvetta Lizatović wrote a very good and creative diploma thesis and I recommend it to pass with the mark excellent (1).

In Prague, August 29th, 2021

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PhDr. Přemysl Houda, PhD.